

UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY INTERFACE WORKGROUP

October 19, 2005

The goals of the Community Interface Workgroup are to provide guidance and direction on town hall meetings and public website content, develop a dissemination plan for the recommendations of the Advisory Council, and develop strategies to engage community stakeholders and leaders to build a larger consensus.

To that end the Community Interface Workgroup has planned 10 town hall meeting in conjunction with local partners. Three have already and been held, five additional ones are scheduled yet in October and two will be held in November. We are learning a great deal from these meeting. First, we are discovering regional issues in that in some areas of the state where there are no HMOs, Medicaid recipients are having a difficult time accessing care since many providers don't accept Medicaid. Several participants stated that they felt health is a right and must be available for all Michigianians. We are looking forward to the rest of these town hall meetings so we can determine statewide, as well as regional themes of concern.

The SPG workplan also includes focus groups to be held with employers as well as insurance agents and brokers. MPHI is planning these meetings, which will be held between now and the end of the year. Eight focus groups with employers are scheduled around the state, with the groups being divided between those who insure their workers and those who do not so as to avoid one group unduly influencing the comments of the other.

The Community Interface Workgroup also thought it important to have focus groups with the uninsured. Three focus groups with the uninsured are currently being planned, one in Detroit, one on the west side of the state and one in rural Michigan. We anticipate these will be very informative.

The Workgroup is also developing a communications plan to insure that information about the project is brought to the public. The plan calls for monthly press releases and working with local media to encourage them to do human interest articles on the uninsured.

The website is up and running. We are hopeful you will use it to keep abreast of the activities of the various workgroups. Meeting notices, agendas, minutes and handouts are available for all the workgroups, as well as for the Advisory Council. The address is www.michigan.gov/spg . Research that the Models Development workgroup is using in their deliberations is also posted.

Soon the Community Interface Workgroup will begin working on key informant interviews and a May conference at which the findings and recommendations from the SPG will be presented to stakeholders.